

MARKED-UP COPY OF AMENDED CLAIMS:

1. (Thrice Amended) A planarization method of inter-layer dielectrics, comprising the steps of:

providing a semiconductor substrate including a field oxide, a source, a drain, and a gate formed thereon;

forming a dielectric layer used as an inter-layer dielectric on said semiconductor substrate, lapping said dielectric layer by means of a chemical mechanical polishing; and

forming on said lapped dielectric layer a cap layer of a refractive index larger than 1.6 [and having a thickness thereof in the range of 300-2000Å],

wherein said cap layer is a silicon nitrogen-oxide layer translucent to ultra-violet light.

9. (Thrice Amended) A planarization method of inter-metal dielectrics, comprising the steps of:

providing a semiconductor substrate having a plurality of metal-interconnects formed thereon;

forming a dielectric layer used as an inter-metal dielectric on said substrate, lapping said dielectric layer by means of a chemical mechanical polishing; and

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forming on said lapped dielectric layer a cap layer of a refractive index larger than 1.6 [and having a thickness thereof in the range of 300-2000Å],
wherein said cap layer is a silicon nitrogen-oxide layer translucent to ultra-violet light.

REMARKS

This Preliminary Amendment has been necessitated by the urge of the Applicant to further distinguish his invention from the prior art cited by the Examiner in the Final Official Action mailed 24 July 2002, the Response to which is being entered with the Request for Continued Examination, as well as with Request for one (1) month Extension of Time and the necessary fee, all filed concurrently with the current Preliminary Amendment. As such, by this Preliminary Amendment, the Applicant requests to amend Claims 1 and 9 (previously twice amended) to emphasize that "...said cap layer is a silicon nitrogen-oxide layer translucent to ultra-violet light".

It is respectfully submitted that the Patents neither to Andideh nor to Ang, et al., cited by the Examiner in the Final Official Action dated 24 July 2002, taken singly or in combination thereof, disclose, suggest, or render obvious:

- a. a cap layer of a refractive index larger than 1.6; and
- b. a cap layer made of a silicon nitrogen-oxide translucent to ultraviolet light.

The claimed combination of elements is not found for the purposes and objectives disclosed in the subject Application even when Andideh and Ang, et al. references are combined as suggested by the Examiner. Accordingly, Claims 1 and 9 (as amended by

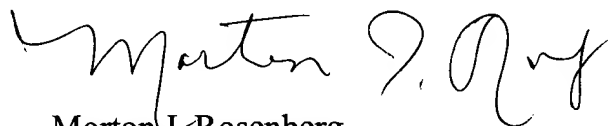
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this Preliminary Amendment) are believed to be allowable over Andideh and Ang, et al.; and the same is respectfully urged.

Claims 2-4 dependent upon Claim 1, and Claims 10-15, dependent upon Claim 9, are believed each to add further limitations that are patentably distinct in addition to being dependent upon what is now believed to be a patentable base Claim and, therefore, allowable for at least the same reasons.

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is now believed that the subject Patent Application has been placed in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Morton J. Rosenberg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Morton" being more prominent than the last name "Rosenberg".

Morton J. Rosenberg
Registration #26,049

Rosenberg, Klein & Lee
3458 Ellicott Center Drive-Suite 101
Ellicott City, MD 21043
(410) 465-6678